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October 1, 2004

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45
Notice of *Ex Parte* Communication

Dear Ms. Dortch:

This letter is submitted pursuant to Section 1.1206(b)(2) of the Commission's Rules to provide notice of a permitted oral *ex parte* presentation in the above-referenced proceeding. On September 30, 2004, Kevin Hess, Robert De Broux, Kathleen Wallman, and the undersigned, on behalf of TDS Telecommunications Corp. (TDS Telecom), met with Thomas Buckley, Anita Cheng, and Narda Jones of the Wireline Competition Bureau.

The parties discussed TDS Telecom's position on the Commission's criteria and procedures for designating eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs), as reflected in the Rural LECs' Application for Review of the order designating Nextel Partners as an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) in several states¹ and in TDS Telecom's comments on the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning the Joint Board's Recommended Decision on the ETC designation process and the scope of high-cost universal service support.² We also distributed the attached overview of TDS Telecom's incumbent LEC operations.

¹ Application for Review of the Rural Local Exchange Carriers, CC Docket No. 96-45 (filed Sept. 24, 2004).

² Comments of TDS Telecommunications Corp., CC Docket No. 96-45 (filed Aug. 6, 2004).

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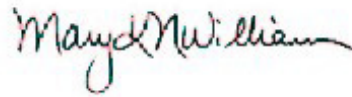
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Please address any questions to the undersigned.

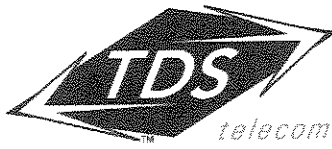
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mary Newcomer Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "W".

Mary Newcomer Williams
Counsel to TDS Telecom

Attachment

cc: Thomas Buckley
Anita Cheng
Narda Jones



TDS Telecom Overview

TDS Telecom exemplifies the goals of the Telecom Act of 1996. TDS is a Chicago-based Fortune 500 telecommunications corporation founded in 1969. Our ILEC operating companies have been providing high quality, affordable telecommunications services to rural communities for 100 years. Championing the economic development of these communities is an integral part of our corporate mission.

ILEC Operations

- 112 local exchange companies in 28 states
- Over 700,000 access lines
- DSL service to over 35,000 customers
- Long distance service to over 262,000 customers
- Internet access service to over 145,000 customers
- Company sizes range from 571 to 70,000 access lines
- Average number of access lines per square mile - 19; RBOC average - 128

